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## Mapping the sharing's 'lumps'

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How economic categories help in reading a new urban geography

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### Synopsis

Today the fragmentation and complexification of needs no longer finds satisfaction nor in the public welfare system nor in the private market. This condition has opened to the rising of collective and cooperative sharing practices to balance this gap and to build new connections among citizens and with the space. The phenomenon has been observed in several European cities and consists of a wide variety of experiences able to modify the space building a new urban geography made of lumps characterized by flexible boundaries no longer inscribed in traditional dualism private-public. To understand the complexity of this urban geography it seems appropriate to refer to more stinging categories coming from the economic discipline.

**Key words:** Sharing, property, practices, morphology, lumps.

## 1. Sharing and self-made practices

Today the consolidation of some past requirements (safety, privacy, self-representation) and the rising of new concerns (ecology, sustainability) have moved toward a rising of new needs related to the evolution of the social and cultural system (Sennett 1970; Bauman 2000; Amin & Thrift N. 2002). These more fleeting and complex instances does not seem to be completely reflected in the public welfare system neither in the private market. Indeed this condition looks like to be balanced by an emerging of practices and experiments of sharing and self-made. A change, based on new connections (not just among people but also between them and the space) built on local resources and not referred to the familial, cultural, or religious relationship rather by affinities (Ambrosini 2005) and proximity. This thickening of relationships (Bianchetti & Sampieri, 2014), means not just involving people in participation processes, but also an acknowledging of the value of the associated actions to the collective wellbeing. Within these experiences it seems to resist a reference to the collectivity based on heterogeneous and labile bonds as the result of that 'pragmatism of collaboration' that on the one hand overcomes the initial forms of ideoritmia (Barthes, 2004) or extimité (Lacan J., 1994) but on the other one set up an intermittent and protean social system.

The phenomenon has been observed in several European cities – Madrid, Torino, Napoli, Bruxelles I.e.<sup>1</sup> - and consist of a wide variety of experiences able to built small and simple societies (Durkheim, 1893) moreover without close adhesion or participation rules and sometimes able to shape small or big modifications of the space.

The reference to cooperations forms and to local resources (Bagnasco 2001) is not just an issue able to give back to the civil society the capacity and responsibility of self-organization in the search for well-being or useful to define the common goods, but are also matters suitable to improve the urban quality (Munarin Tosi 2014).

## 2. Sharing and self-made spaces

These practices in their rooting and repeating on the ground define more resilient places. The proposed spatial forms are frequently mutable and easily characterisable, outcome of an 'incremental' evolution (Cottino, 2009) and of 'cross interactions dynamics' (Crosta 2007). Indeed the transformation of the spaces, as well as the social structures, are rarely the result of conventional subsidiarity politics neither of top-down or bottom-up strategies. Furthermore these experiences, thanks to the relationship between social life and spatial organization, laying the basis to suggest a new urban geography made of partitions. However, we are not speaking about well defined and homogeneous neighbourhoods rather we are thinking about 'lumps'. Spatial and social structure, characterized by blurred, sometimes straddled, boundaries able to evolve according to needs and resources define adaptive spaces, protean in

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<sup>1</sup> Some researches have collected many of these experiences: 'We Traders', organized by the Goethe Institut, or 'territori della condivisione' coordinated by Cristina Bianchetti. In any case the phenomenon is growing continuously, sometimes supported by local municipalities or national policies

time and in space, partially connected and partially autonomous among them but rarely able to build polycentric urban networks.

These lumps, on one hand, suggest recovering the idea of homogeneous social groupings, as structure useful to describe a morphology of space, and on the other one underline a gap with the trend to unify local partitions to reduce the administrative efforts. However recognizing their existence does not mean being able to uniquely identify their form or consistency, their borders or identities. In fact, these aggregations are rarely coincident with functional or administrative traditional partitions and hardly inscribed into polarised categories (private – public, indoor – outdoor) traditionally used to describe the urban types. Furthermore they describe a geography made of fragmented 'bubbles' (Sloterdijk, 1999), not complementary, in shape and extension, of the urban fabric. Thinking the urban tissue as a 'foam' or as a 'sponge' (Sloterdijk, 2004) needs a changing perspective in methodology and in the identification of categories useful to understand the new complexity.

### **3. The morphology of property**

The identification of this fragmentation and articulation of spaces suggest revising the categories used to describe and map the urban tissue as well as of the methodology to analyze and depict the results. Furthermore, the issue opens with the investigation of several aspects. One of them is the property and its role in defining the space. Indeed this rising phenomenon seems to define new balances no longer uniquely expressible in the private-public dualism but related to a broader idea of the common (Lefebvre, 1968) that more freely weaves collective, individual and public spheres. An integrated approach, more connected to economic discipline, opens to a wider range of categories with clearer definitions. A first categorization (Mas-Colell, Whinston & Green, 1995) identifies types of goods according to their feature of rival or excludable: private (rivalry and excludability), Club (excludable and partially rivalry) commons (rival and not excludable) and public (neither excludable nor rival). Another taxonomy could identify several property specifications (O'Sullivan, 2007) to identify who has the capability to access or to restrict access (exclusivity), or if someone can manage it (management), or modify and sell it (alienation). The drawing, and the comparison, of maps, realized using such categories could describe more accurately the fragmented urban tissue previously described. Similar issues have been previously faced using big data (Space syntax i.e.) or using clustering models (Hidalgo 2015 i.e.) or suggesting direct observations on the field (D.P.A. 2013). The approach that we would like to pursue is based on a morphological mapping of such categories in order to identify aggregations, fragmentations, gaps through the achievement of relevant sections around meaningful nodes and experiences previously identified for their capability to realize aggregations: collective market, purchasing groups, aggregative space etc.



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## Biography

**Simone Devoti.** Architect and Ph.D. in Urbanism confirmed by IUAV of Venice. He is Adjunct Professor of Urbanism and Architecture in Politecnico of Turin. His research dealt with the evolution of the cooperative practices of local welfare and wellbeing production. In particular he has focus the attention on the capacity of some experiences to create new temporary and flexible communities and local 'lumps' in the urban geography. During the last years he had the possibility to enrich his research opening it up to the asian context thanks to a collaboration with Southeast University (Nanjing) and Luoyang Normal University (Luoyang). His approach weaves the application of Urban Economics categories and Urban Morphology Analysis.